

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Thursday 4 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Corporate Health and Safety Annual Report		
<b>Report of:</b>	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	Yes	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	Yes
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

**Summary:**

The report provides Cabinet with assurance on the progress made to implement the Council's Health and Safety policy during 2022/23.

**Recommendation(s):**

Cabinet to note the progress on implementing the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Policy during 2022/23.

**Reasons for the Recommendation(s):**

The annual report provides assurance to the Cabinet, which has strategic responsibility for employee health and safety, that there is continued progress to implement and enhance an effective health and safety system across the Council.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:** (including any Risk Implications)

None.

**What will it cost and how will it be financed?**

**(A) Revenue Costs** - There are no revenue costs arising from this report outside the existing approved budget.

**(B) Capital Costs**- There are no capital costs arising from the report.

**Implications of the Proposals:**

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b>	
There are no resource implications associated with the report.	
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	
There are no legal implications associated with the report.	
<b>Equality Implications:</b>	
There are no equality implications.	
<b>Impact on Children and Young People:</b>	
There is no impact to Children and Young People	
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	N
Have a neutral impact	Y
Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y
The report has a neutral impact as it provides a summary of health and safety activity across the Council that has already taken place. There have been no incidents that have been reported that could have detrimentally affected the climate.	

**Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:**

Protect the most vulnerable: Positive.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Positive.
Commission, broker and provide core services: Positive.
Place – leadership and influencer: Positive
Drivers of change and reform: Positive
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Positive.
Greater income for social investment: Positive
Cleaner Greener; Positive

**What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

## **(A) Internal Consultations**

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7449/23.) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5549/23) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

## **(B) External Consultations**

None

## **Implementation Date for the Decision**

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

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## **Appendices:**

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Annual Health and Safety report

## **Background Papers:**

There are no background papers available for inspection.

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council in accordance with its responsibilities to manage health and safety, approved a Council-wide Corporate Health and Safety Policy in April 2019. The policy sets out the Council’s approach to health and safety, the responsibilities for key staff for managing the system and the arrangements within the Council for monitoring health and safety.
- 1.2 A key objective from the Policy is to clarify and strengthen governance arrangements for health and safety across the Council.
- 1.3 The Policy outlines that the Cabinet has strategic responsibility for employee related health and safety in the Council and that the Audit and Governance committee's responsibilities are to consider the Council's arrangements for health and safety, receive regular assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- 1.4 The Policy also states that the Corporate Health and Safety Team is responsible for providing an annual report on Health and Safety to Cabinet on behalf of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services. This report is designed to meet this requirement.

- 1.5 Currently the Audit and Governance Committee receives an update on health and safety performance on a quarterly basis which includes the following information:
- Progress on health and safety actions due to be undertaken during the quarter.
  - Updates on health and safety performance including accidents and incidents.
  - Any emerging legal or health safety related issues.
  - Proposed activity in the next quarter.

## **2. Annual Report**

- 2.1 The Annual Report for Health and Safety is designed to provide assurance to Cabinet of the continued progress to implement health and safety effectively across the Council. The progress update will assist Cabinet meet its strategic responsibility for employee health and safety.
- 2.2 Providing an annual report to Cabinet on health and safety will assist in the achievement of the health and safety objective, including in the Corporate Health and Safety Policy, of improving governance.
- 2.3 The Annual Health and Safety Report is attached at Appendix 1 and includes updates on:
- The organisational arrangements for Health and Safety
  - Consultation and communication
  - Liaison during the year with regulatory authorities
  - Details of the reported accidents and incidents during the financial year
  - Training
  - Risk Assessments
  - Sefton Schools
  - Objectives, KPIs and Priorities for 2022/2023
  - Priorities and challenges 2023/24
- 2.4 The key highlights from the report include:
- 2.5 The Council continues to focus on improving the health and safety management system and support by reviewing existing arrangements and improving governance.
- 2.6 The Corporate Health and Safety Team (the team) has seen considerable change during the reporting period with two staff members leaving and two new staff members appointed. There is an intention to increase the team during the 2023/24 financial year to ensure that the team has sufficient capacity to provide statutory support to nearly 8,000 staff across schools and service areas, plus agency workers, contractors, and volunteers.
- 2.7 The team deliver a range of services across all Council and school premises, including their associated activities. These services can be divided into three main areas, being, policy and communication, operational reactive response, and active monitoring.

- 2.8 The continued relaxation of Covid-19 rules throughout the 2022/23 period saw many areas re-start normal operations thereby increasing the footfall to that which had been experienced in the previous twelve months.
- 2.9 Consultation arrangements continue to work well, with the Corporate Health and Safety Committee playing a key role in conjunction with the Departmental Health and Safety Sub-committees.
- 2.10 The health and safety position within the Council shows early signs of progress, with many sections taking a pro-active stance towards safety management throughout the year. The Council's accident reporting culture is improving and showing signs of increased investigation and implementation of suitable controls, with the online incident reporting system also being better utilised. There are areas that require improvement and therefore work will continue throughout the 2023/24 period to increase usage and encourage better quality reporting.
- 2.11 The Schools Service Level Agreement continues to be reviewed as well as the inspection and audit processes being revitalised.
- 2.12 Health and safety objectives are continually reviewed, and this is managed by the continual review and reshaping of service delivery to assist the Council in meeting its statutory obligations and provide managers and staff with relevant support.
- 2.13 Post pandemic work has included the review of first aid and fire marshalling provision for Sefton Council's buildings, as more staff return to the office, albeit most of them returning on a hybrid basis.

### **3. Progress since April 2023 on health and safety**

- 3.1 The focus for 2023/2024 has been on:
- 3.2 Recruitment to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the team to ensure that the Council meets its statutory responsibility on having sufficient competent advice across the organisation.
- 3.3 The review and updating of the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy and testing of the emergency arrangements across Council settings.
- 3.4 Promoting the importance of accident, incident and near miss reporting, improving the quality of information submitted, along with the depth and effectiveness of investigation. We have been improving the availability of the incident reporting system for staff and managers to report incidents. Reducing the numbers of erroneously reported RIDDOR incidents by service areas to the HSE.
- 3.5 Creating improved working channels between health and safety and other departments, such as property services, traded services, and Sefton Arc.

- 3.6 Progress on the completion and review of risk assessments has continued throughout the year, for general workplace hazards. The team are working with Assistant Directors and Service Managers to develop a culture of hazard identification at the earliest opportunity rather than following any change, implementation of planned, suitable internal risk control measures with supporting procedures, consultation, management and staff and training, and effective monitoring of workplaces, activities, and behaviours.
- 3.7 Restructuring the schools health and safety support programme for the 2024/25 school year, ensuring that the programme is fit for purpose and able to compete with outside agencies providing similar services to that covered by the Sefton SLA.
- 3.8 The review and implementation of controls in relation to aggression towards Sefton Council employees.
- 3.9 Introducing a programme of hand arm vibration controls for employees subjected to vibrating equipment.
- 3.10 Delivering an audit programme across Schools and Offices to determine the implementation of the Council's Health and Safety Policy and procedures.